

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, NL

SUBJECT: LIBERALS AND LABOR BIG WINNERS IN
IMPORTANT MUNICIPAL ELECTION

1. SUMMARY: IN THE FIRST MAJOR ELECTION SINCE NOVEMBER 1972, VOTERS OF ZAA NSTAD, NEW URBAN AGGLOMERATION NORTH OF AMSTERDAM, GAVE THE LABOR PARTY AND LIBERALS SIGNIFICANT GAINS. KVP HELD ITS OWN WHILE THE PROTESTANT RELIGIOUS PARTIES DECLINED. PPR SUFFERED SLIGHT LOSS AND D'66 AND DS'70 WERE DECIMATED. ELECTION RESULTS ARE BEING HERALDED BY LABOR AS A SIGN OF PUBLIC APPROVAL OF CABINET. BOTH LIBERAL AND LABOR SPOKESMEN ARE BULLISH ABOUT PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 1974. END SUMMARY.

2. IN SPECIAL ELECTION FOR MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF ZAA NSTAD, RECENTLY CREATED URBAN AGGLOMERATION NORTH OF AMSTERDAM, BOTH LABOR PARTY AND LIBERALS REGISTERED IMPRESSIVE GAINS. LABOR'S SHARE OF THE VOTE WENT UP 3 PERCENT AND VVD'S SHARE CLIMBED BY 3.2 PERCENT. KVP REGISTERED SLIGHT GAIN, BUT THE PROTESTANT PARTIES (ARP AND CHU) DECLINED. DS'70 HAD ITS STRENGTH HALVED. D'66, WHICH DECLINED OVER 4 PERCENTAGE POINTS, WILL NOT EVEN BE REPRESENTED IN THE NEW MUNICIPAL COUNCIL. PPR SHARE OF VOTE ALSO DECLINED SLIGHTLY. CPN (COMMUNIST PARTY), WHICH
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IS STRONG IN THIS AREA, REGISTERED GAIN OF 1 PERCENT.

3. STATE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, MARCEL VAN DAM, WHO MADE NAME FOR HIMSELF AS POLLING EXPERT, TERMED ZAAANSTAD ELECTION A "GIGANTIC VICTORY FOR DEN UYL CABINET." VAN DAM CLAIMED ZAAANSTAD REPRESENTATIVE OF COUNTRY AS A WHOLE. HE WAS THEREFORE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT LABOR'S CHANCES IN PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 1974. LABOR FLOOR LEADER ED VAN THIJN WAS MORE MODERATE, SUGGESTING LOCAL ISSUES HAD IMPORTANT INFLUENCE ON ELECTION OUTCOME. BUT HE TOO CLAIMED RESULTS INDICATED LABOR WOULD DO WELL IN PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS. VVD LEADER HANS WIEGEL, WHOSE PARTY HAD HIGHER PERCENTAGE GAIN THAN LABOR, ARGUED RESULTS SHOWED CORRECTNESS OF HIS POLICY.

4. COMMENT: ZAAANSTAD MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS WERE FIRST MAJOR ELECTORAL CONTEST SINCE SECOND CHAMBER ELECTIONS OF NOVEMBER 1972. RESULTS SUGGEST POLITICAL POLARIZATION PROCESS CONTINUING UNABATED. SUPPORT THAT PREVIOUSLY WENT TO D'66 AND DS'70 IS NOW GOING TO THE VVD. LABOR TOO IS STILL SCORING SIGNIFICANT GAINS. MOREOVER, GAINS MADE BY THE COMMUNISTS ARE PROBABLY VOTES WHICH WOULD GO TO LABOR IF LABOR WERE NOT IN GOVERNMENT. KVP'S ABILITY TO HOLD ITS OWN SHOULD STRENGTHEN THOSE IN PARTY WHO SUPPORT DECISION TO COOPERATE WITH LABOR IN CURRENT COALITION. PPR'S LOSS SUGGESTS THAT THE PPR'S IMPRESSIVE GAINS IN LAST ELECTION MAY HAVE BEEN ONE-SHOT PHENOMENON, LIKE INITIAL PERFORMANCES OF D'66 AND DS'70.
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